



Heartland Virus Quick Facts

Heartland virus was first identified as a cause of human illness in Missouri in 2009. Heartland virus is thought to be spread to people by infected ticks. There is still much more to be learned about Heartland virus and its public health significance. Please visit the ISDH Heartland virus page for more information (<https://www.in.gov/isdh/28039.htm>).

Transmission

Heartland virus can be transmitted by the bite of the Lone Star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*). It is not known whether other tick species are able to transmit Heartland virus.

Signs and symptoms

The signs and symptoms of Heartland virus disease are similar to those of ehrlichiosis or anaplasmosis. Most patients have reported a tick bite in the two weeks before they became sick.

Most patients have reported fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, headache, nausea, diarrhea, and muscle or joint aches. Almost all patients with Heartland have been hospitalized. Although most patients have fully recovered, a few have died.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis of Heartland virus disease is based upon the patient's signs and symptoms, a history of possible exposure to ticks, and appropriate laboratory testing. If you think that you have Heartland virus disease, contact your health care provider right away.

People who have removed an attached tick sometimes wonder if they should have it tested for tick-borne diseases. Although some laboratories offer this testing, ISDH does not recommend it. If the tick tests positive, it does not necessarily mean that you have been infected; if the tick tests negative, it may provide a false sense of security because you may have been unknowingly bitten by a different tick that was infected.

Treatment

There is no specific medication available to treat Heartland virus disease. People with severe illness may require hospitalization and/or supportive care.



Prevention

The best way to prevent Heartland virus is to avoid tick bites. Please see our tick prevention page (<https://www.in.gov/isdh/20491.htm>) for more information.

For more information about Heartland virus, please visit the CDC Heartland virus webpage (<https://www.cdc.gov/heartland-virus/index.html>).

Statistics

Cases of Heartland virus disease have been identified in the Midwestern and southern US, including two cases in southern Indiana.

National statistics for Heartland virus disease can be found at the CDC Heartland virus Statistics and Maps webpage (<https://www.cdc.gov/heartland-virus/statistics/index.html>).

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